

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



STATE OF ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT OF LAW
1275 W. WASHINGTON STREET
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2926
WWW.AZAG.GOV

ANDREA M. ESQUER
PRESS SECRETARY
PHONE: (602)-542-8019
CELL PHONE: 602-725-2200

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*** Scam Alert ***

Foreign Money Transfer to American Bank Accounts Request

(Phoenix, Ariz. – August 16, 2004) Attorney General Terry Goddard is warning Arizonans of a scam typically known as the Nigerian Advanced Fee request. While many are aware of this scam, the Attorney General's Office wants people to know that this scam is once again being circulated in Arizona through letters and emails.

Prospects are contacted either via fax, email or regular mail by someone claiming to be from a foreign country, requesting assistance in transferring millions of dollars into a United States bank account. The person is typically, but not always, from a country in Africa, and usually claims to hold a high ranking position, or is part of an important committee. This person requests assistance in transferring a secret multi-million dollar surplus to which they have access, and wants to bring the money to the United States.

"This scam has been around since 1996," Goddard said. "Yet some people still answer the call for help. I want to remind Arizona residents of the simple rule: If an offer sounds too good to be true – it is."

The person initiating the contact (the scammer) promises to give a percentage of the money transferred, typically 20 to 30 percent, as a payment for the assistance. The proposal says that the remaining money "transferred" will be given back to the scammer, with a small percentage set aside for various taxes or transfer expenses.

The scammer usually requests various expenses upfront and requests money for these fees to be sent with the promise of reimbursement after the millions are transferred. The payment of advance fees is the ultimate goal for these scammers. The money for transfer does not exist, and the victim is left with nothing.

more

Although the stories have several variations, the common themes are:

- A foreign national asking for your help to transfer money into an American bank account
- Millions of dollars are at issue, with a promise of a percentage of the transferred money
- The matter is strictly confidential
- A plea for sympathy is interwoven in the story
- The money was found or created in a dishonest manner.

Here are some tips to help residents avoid these types of scams:

- Never give personal financial information, such as your bank account number, unless you are sure you understand the transaction and you can trust the person to whom you give it.
- Beware of a false sense of urgency and a request to keep the transaction confidential.

Attached is a version of this scam Mr. Goddard recently received on his home fax machine. If you know someone who has been contacted to participate in this scam, please contact the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the U.S. Secret Service at:

FBI Phoenix 201 East Indianola Avenue, Suite 400 Phoenix, Arizona 85012-2080 phoenix.fbi.gov (602) 279-5511	United States Secret Service Financial Crimes Division 1800 G Street, N.W. Room 942 Washington, D.C.
---	--

For more information, please visit the Arizona Attorney General's Office Web site at www.azag.gov and click on "Consumer." The Nigerian scam information is located under Helpful Hints.

###